

Now, the parade organizers did not know me or care about this issue, but the family who kindly put me up there, after my stay in the hospital for dehydration, happened to be good friends of the parade chairman. It was like that every step of the way—always just the right person at just the right moment.

It continued across the country. Let me remind you that last Sunday it rained heavily in Washington, and last Monday it was very cold and windy, and Tuesday, when a nice day would be good for the big march across town to the Capitol steps, why, the weather here was a perfect springlike day.

The blessings have been uncountable.

I do not mean to suggest that the Lord makes doing the right thing easy. My walk was not easy. But he seems to clear the field for you when you are ready to do serious battle. He does appreciate, I think, our moments of courage and He does not mind showing His hand at such times.

Finally, let me make a spiritual note regarding the issue itself.

Is it not so that we are charged in this life with doing God's work where we might? Are we not the keepers of our brothers and sisters? Are we not to be agents for justice and equality and kindness? Surely we cannot fulfill our high role if we do not have the power to manage our collective resources. Surely, only a free and empowered people can properly take care of one another. If we allow ourselves to lose our ability to manage our considerable common wealth to best address the great needs of our people, we abdicate our earthly responsibilities to our God, do we not?

If we allow the greedy and the inhuman elements to steal away from us our self-government, because we did not have the energy or the courage to fight for it and to use it as a tool of our love and our wisdom, how shall we answer for that?

Is campaign finance reform a religious issue? It is one of the central religious issues of our times, and I of course speak to the condition of the entire world, not just our few states. If we are to do the right things for our people and for the lovely home given us by God, then we must, as free adults, have the power to do what is right. I do not mean that churches and states should mix: it is enough that our civic values, which we all share with only a few arguments around the edges, are informed by our deeper beliefs in the equality of people and basic rights of all God's creations.

PENSION COVERAGE

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, America's workers have made the record 107 month economic expansion possible. They deserve to reap the rewards of our national prosperity. They deserve income security, and in particular, they deserve to have a pension and the ability to save for retirement. Approximately 51 million workers—about half the workforce—lack pension coverage of any kind. For these workers, retirement security is very precarious and their economic future more uncertain.

This Congress has an obligation to expand pension coverage to boost retirement security for all Americans. We know what will make a difference to millions of workers. We should, for example, increase the portability of dif-

ferent types of pensions by allowing employees to more easily roll-over these assets when they change jobs. We should provide tax relief to help small businesses starting a pension plan. We should reduce vesting periods. These are common-sense steps, and steps that we are all ready and willing to take. In fact, more than 100 members of this body have joined me sponsoring the Retirement Security Act, which would implement each of these options, and more.

The bill before us today, H.R. 3932, takes some steps in the right direction on pensions. Regrettably, it shortchanges average working men and women who need the most help in saving for retirement. Instead, it sweetens the pension pot for the wealthiest employees, those who have little to worry about with respect to their own retirement. The implicit, unsubstantiated promise of H.R. 3832 is that highly-compensated employees, who presumably have decision-making authority about pension coverage, will expand pension coverage for lower-wage employees as they attempt to take advantage of the bill's enhanced contribution and disbursement features for themselves. It is an \$18 billion gamble that may not pay off for most workers. The only certainty is that the highly compensated will benefit.

According to an analysis prepared by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, of the \$18 billion in pension benefits in H.R. 3832, 91.5% would accrue to the top 10 percent of earners, those with annual incomes above \$89,000. At the same time, the lowest 60% of earners would receive less than 1% of the benefits in the package. To make matters worse, the Center's analysis shows that the increasing income thresholds for determining contributions to pension plans from \$170,000 to \$200,000, employers can save money by reducing pension coverage for lower wage employees. Indeed, if an employer contributes a flat percentage of each employee's pay to a pension, he can continue to reward the highest paid workers with the same dollar contribution while reducing the percentage of pay contributed to each worker at the lower end of the pay-scale.

I believe that we would better direct these resources toward middle- and lower-income workers and toward small business that want to provide retirement security to their employees. My bill accomplishes these goals by shortening vesting periods, providing credits to small businesses that start plans, and boosting pension equity for women. The President has proposed a series of pension and savings initiatives that would enhance retirement savings. He proposes tax credits that would encourage small businesses to establish a pension plan and to match employee contributions. He also proposes tax credits for financial institutions that establish retirement savings accounts for lower-income workers who do not have pension coverage at work.

Some in this body think passing these pension provisions today gets Congress off the hook in terms of real reform. It does not. I stand here to say that our job is far from finished when it comes to helping middle- and low-income workers save for retirement. I hope that we can all continue to work on this issue and pass comprehensive legislation expanding size pension coverage to every American.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH HONOREES

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor local citizens from the 9th District of Texas who were chosen during Black History Month for their work. While the dedication of African-American leaders is well-known throughout the United States, local citizens, right here in the Southeast Gulf Coast region, are just as important to ensuring equal rights for all Texans. Last month I asked members of the communities in the 9th District to nominate individuals for my "Unsung Heroes" award that gives special recognition to those unsung heroes, willing workers, and individuals who are so much a part of our nation's rich history. Recipients were chosen because they embodied a giving and sharing spirit, and had made a contribution to our nation.

These individuals have not only talked the talk, but they have walked the walk. They have worked long and hard for equal rights in their churches, schools, and in their communities. While their efforts may not make the headlines every day, their pioneering struggle for equality and justice is nevertheless vital to our entire region. This region of Southeast Texas is not successful in spite of our diversity; we are successful because of it.

Please join me in recognizing and congratulating these community leaders for their support of bringing justice and equality to Southeast Texas. It is leaders like these men and women that continue to be a source of pride not only during Black History Month, but all year long. The winners of this year's "Unsung Heroes" award are:

Ms. Sharon Lewis, Mrs. Eslen Brown Love, Constable Terry Petteway, Mr. Alex Pratt, Miss June Pinckney Ross, Ms. Ann Simmons, Mr. James Steadham, Mrs. Maggie Williams, Mrs. Valencia Huff Arceneaux, Mr. T.D. Armstrong, Mr. Melton Bell, Mr. Craig Bowie, Ms. Linda Brooks, Dr. Lisa Cain, Mrs. Izola Collins, Mr. Paul A. Cox, Pastor Marvin C. Delaney, Mrs. Idella Duncan, Mrs. Gloria Ellisor, Mayor Leon Evans, Ms. Vera Bell Gary, Ms. Wilina Gatson, Mrs. Ann Grant, Mr. Deyossie Harris, Mrs. Edna Jensen, Mr. Cleveland Nisby, Mr. Collis Cannon, Reverend Ransom Howard, Mrs. Hargie Faye Savoy, Judge Theodore Johns, Mr. Eddie Seniguar, Mrs. Marie Hubbard, Judge Paul Brown, Mr. Lewis Hodge, Mrs. Mandy Plummer, Mrs. Fabiola B. Small, Dr. Rosa Smith-Williams, Mr. Tobe Duhon, Rev. Isaiah Washington, Sr., Mrs. Barbara Hannah-Keys, Ms. Nina Gail Stelley, Mr. Herman Hudson, Mrs. Lillian M. LeBlanc, Dr. Carroll Thomas, Dr. William T.B. Lewis, Mr. Raymond Johnson, Mr. Amos Evans, State Rep. Al Price, and Rev. G.W. Daniels.

Mr. Speaker, the recipients of the "Unsung Heroes" award are dedicated and hardworking individuals who have done so much for their neighbors and for this nation as a whole. Today, I stand to recognize their spirit and to say that I am honored to be their Representative.

HONORING CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY MEN'S BAS-
KETBALL TEAM

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise enthusiastically, to pay tribute to the Central Connecticut State University men's basketball team for their accomplishment this week.

This past Monday, the CCSU Blue Devils defeated Robert Morris 63-46 to win the Northeast Conference tournament final for the first time since joining Division I in 1986. This is an amazing achievement for coach Howie Dickenman and the entire Blue Devil team. The team will now make their first appearance playing the NCAA tournament.

The leadership and hard work demonstrated by coach Howie Dickenman and the Blue Devils is an example to us all. While finishing with a record of 4-22, only two seasons ago, they have proven this year, that through persistence and strength of character, any sought after goal is possible.

I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating this extraordinary group of young men and their coaches, parents, classmates and others who supported and cheered them on through this long journey.

Their determination throughout the entire season has been an inspiration to all of us. Congratulations to the Blue Devils and best of luck in the NCAA tournament!

IN RECOGNITION OF KATIE
MCGWIN

HON. ROBERT A WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Katie McGwin, a resident of North Kingstown, Rhode Island and a fifth-grader at Quidnesset Elementary School. Katie was among the winners of this year's National Sportsmanship Day essay contest for her positive essay on responsibility and encouragement.

March 7th was the Tenth Annual National Sportsmanship Day and I am pleased to say that in all of the fifty states, and in one hundred and one other countries students, athletes, coaches, and educators spent the day focusing on the merits of good sportsmanship. In more than 12,000 institutions worldwide, students participated in programs such as "The No Swear Zone", essay and poster contests, student roundtables, and coaches forums in an effort to promote good sportsmanship among our youth.

Just ten years ago this program existed only in Rhode Island elementary schools, founded by my good friend Mr. Daniel E. Doyle, Jr., Executive Director of the Institute for International Sport at the University of Rhode Island, and now it is an international event. This is a wonderful program whose value is evident by the speed of its growth and broad reach of its appeal.

Katie's essay espoused the virtues of true sportsmanship and brought to light the bene-

fits that sportsmanship can offer to our families, our communities, and our nation. Sportsmanship, as Katie notes, is about many things, both on and off the field of play; it is about hard work and effort, responsibility, kindness to others, honesty, fair play, ethical behavior and it is about encouragement. These values are beneficial for our homes, for our workplaces and for our schools. In an age when violence too often penetrates our educational institutions and our communities, these are the ethics and values—which Katie so eloquently discussed—that must be promoted and encouraged by parents, educators and coaches.

I would like to commend Katie for her wisdom and her character and want to encourage her to maintain them throughout her life as they will bring her success in her professional and personal life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 8, 2000 votes were held while I was in route to the Capitol, as were other members, therefore, I missed roll call votes 29, 30, and 31.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on the passage of H.R. 1827, the "Government Waste Corrections Act."

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" to suspend the rules and pass the H.R. 2952 redesignate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service in Greenville, South Carolina as the Keith D. Oglesby Station.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H.R. 3018 to designate the U.S. Postal Office in Charleston, South Carolina as the Marybelle H. Howe Post Office.

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF CONNIE
M. DEFORD

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a wonderful lady, Ms. Connie Deford, of Bay City, Michigan, on the occasion of her retirement from her post as City Clerk of Bay City. Connie has been our trusted clerk since 1986, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that both in character and spirit, Connie is an inspiration to those around her and will be sorely missed by her co-workers.

Connie was born in my home town of Bay City and has a long history of contributing to our community, both as an elected official and as a civic leader. In fact, Connie's service to Bay City is touted as a model for all aspiring elected officials. Everyone who has worked with Connie knows that her retirement will leave very big shoes to fill. However, her accomplishments as City Clerk will endure as a blueprint for all to follow.

Connie is very active in our city's civic affairs and has been awarded numerous awards

for her extraordinary service. Mr. Speaker, time restraints dictate that I mention just a few of the many honors she has received. Perhaps one of her most prestigious awards is the Quill Award, given by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, the largest international clerk organization, to recognize the most qualified and dedicated clerk in the world. Other awards she has received include being elected Michigan Municipal Clerk of the Year, nominated for the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Athena Award for Professional Women, awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship Rotarian of the Year, and awarded the Great Lakes College Honorary Doctor of Letters, as well as the Municipal League Special Award of merit.

Her contributions to our community are equally impressive. Connie has been an active member of her church, Holy Trinity, where she is on the Administration Commission and serves as a member of the Adult Choir. She is involved with such admirable institutions as the March of Dimes, the Salvation Army, the Great Lakes College Foundation, and the Michigan Municipal League Foundation.

With Connie's unflagging energy and civic-minded commitment, I am sure that retirement will not mean slowing down. Rather, it will mean a new direction and a new focus that will produce results which impact positively on many, many people in our community. I am also sure that Connie will enjoy the company of her daughter Brigette and son Keane, as well as her two grandchildren Austin and Angela.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and our colleagues to join with me in congratulating Bay City City Clerk Connie Deford on the occasion of her retirement, and thanking her for her selfless service to our community. We in Bay City, Michigan, have been truly fortunate to be the recipient of her commitment and vision. Connie has not only been a motivator and creator of civic pride, she precisely embodies our civic pride. I wish her continued success in all her future endeavors.

DRUG COMPANY PROFITEERING:
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH FOR
AMGEN?

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, submitted are portions of a letter which I have sent to the Federal Trade Commission and others.

When one looks at Amgen's SEC filings, it is clear that this price increase was not necessary. It is pure profiteering, largely at taxpayer expense. It is another example of how Flo and her allies cannot be believed in the debate of a Medicare pharmaceutical benefit.

The ancient Greeks knew the wisdom of moderation, and called it the Golden Mean. All these guys know is Golden Greed.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH,
Washington, DC, March 8, 2000.

Hon. ROBERT PITOFKY,
Chairman, Federal Trade Commission,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I urge the Commission to conduct an immediate investigation of the recent price increase in recombinant